खान मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बलराम सिंह यादव) : (क) से (ग) जानकारी एकत्र की जा रही है और सभा पटल पर रख दी जाएगी।

Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd.

2126. SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY : DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited is running in loss for the last three years;

(b) whether Government propose to privatise the said corporation and if so, by when; and

(c) whether the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited has the technical knowhow and the equipment for exploration in consonance with the latest technology available in the world ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) has the technical knowhow and equipment to carry out exploration as generally practised in countries world over.

Gold Deposits in Singhbhoom District Bihar

2127. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Geological Survey of India has discovered a huge quantity of Gold deposit in a remote village in Singhbhoom District of Bihar;

(b) whether it is a fact that Gold has also been found in Monghyr District of Bihar; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken to start the gold mining process and to check present illegal mining in these areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Exploration so far carried out by State Government of Bihar in Sonu Block, Karmatiya Village, Munger District have indicated low gold values between less than 0.1—1.8 g/t of gold. The data obtained so far are not sufficient to establish reserves. Gold mining can be considered only after techno-economic viability of the deposits is established. Checking of illegal mining of minerals is governed by the concerned rules of the State Government.

Production of Copper

2128. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that copper industry is facing a tough competition in the domestic market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps Government propose to take for the survival of the industry ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) Due to poor grade of copper ore, the cost of producing copper in the country is not internationally competitive, Reduction in import duty on copper has also affected the indigenous copper industry. International price of copper has registered sharply declining trends recently due to sluggish market conditions which too has affected realisable copper prices particularly when copper metal is freely importable now.

Government have liberalised Industrial Trade and Fiscal policies to enable indigenous industry to improve product quality and competitiveness through measures like upgradation of technology and import of better quality raw materials.

Manganese Ore (India) Ltd.

2129. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA :
DR. SHRIKANT RAM CHANDRA JICHKAR : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Manganese Ore (India) Ltd. is running in loss for the last three years if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether the Manganese Ore India Ltd. would be privatised in the near future, and if so, by when; and

(c) whether in view of the new economic policy Manganese Mining would be allowed in the Private Sector ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) No, Sir. The actual position is that Manganese Ore (India) Ltd. has been making profits during the period.

(b) There is no proposal to privatise Manganese Ore (India) Ltd.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Merger of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant with SAIL

2130. DR. YELMANCHILI SIVAJI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) wheher Government have received any representations from the workers to merge Visakhapatnam Steel Plant into Steel Authority of India Limited;

(b) if so: what are the details thereof; and

(c) at what stage of consideration these proposals are ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) Visakha Steel Mazdoor Sangh has submitted a memorandum inter-alia demanding that Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) should be merged in SAIL.

(c) There is no proposal to merge VSP with SAIL.

Modernisation of Steel Plants

2131. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) the details of modernisation plans of different steel plants that are awaiting clearance of the Central Government till today along with their dates of submissions;

(b) the details of on-going modernisation programme undertaken by other steel plants together with the amount of payments made to each foreign/domestic companies in the past three years along with the details of resources mobilised in the past three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government could not avoid the delays because of certain irregularities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) The following proposals of steel plants are awaiting clearance :—

(i) Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL) : SAIL's proposal of April, 1992 based on alternative strategy of modernisation.